

The Lighthouse

MAX OWENS

Oh, the weak feeling I had in the pit of my stomach that first Sunday as my car came to a stop in front of Blue Lodge, a place I had rented for the purpose of a community church. Most of the dwellings in this section were given some sort of name; this one suggested the owner's name.

It was painted a pale blue which had almost faded to white from the sun and weather. A two-story house with a full-length screened-in porch, it did not have any of the characteristics that usually are associated with a church. Two cement steps in the center led onto the porch, not much of a vestibule, except, perhaps, for the abandoned town fire bell that rolled out the call of worship. It was understood that the mode of the clanging would determine whether the people were to bring buckets or Bibles, that is, if they had a Bible.

A door from the porch opened into a large room that smelled of scrub water, for the floors were still damp. The only protection from the cold February winds was the outside weatherboarding, but an old, freshly blackened parlor stove radiated

a friendly glow. An adjoining room, that had served as the kitchen, and which still had the gas range and pitcher pump as evidence, was separated by an enclosed stairway. The large opening between the two rooms made it possible to arrange the folding chairs, that had been borrowed from an abandoned tavern, in a semi-circular fashion. At the east end of the large room, in the corner, stood a well seasoned jardiniere stand that had become feeble from the years of service and now was to serve as a rostrum, not very substantial for a young minister who was to deliver his first sermon. The music was supplied by an old upright piano; it was as temperamental to the weather as are some folks' aches and pains. A swivel stool that had at one time been painted green was of little assurance to the pianist.

To complete the setting for our first service, Tabernacle Hymn books with new green binding tape on the backs were distributed among the seats. To us and the humble worshippers it was a cathedral; God was there.

Retrogression

CAROLINE PRESSEL

Suppose that you were suddenly to find yourself twenty-five miles from the nearest town in a cabin on Bay Talaunch in the Alabama forests. How would you manage in this modern day if you were that far from civilization? After having all of the conveniences of modern life as a part of

one's heritage, it is a real art to be able to live happily and comfortably in such an environment.

A trip to the grocery store to purchase heaping quantities of staples is one of the first essential requirements in preparation for this experiment. One must include in

this "master camping list" a considerable quantity of such things as: salt, pepper, flour, bread, butter, sugar, coffee and tea, crackers, cheese, cookies, olives, pickles, jellies and jams, syrups, breakfast cereals, milk, bacon and eggs, pancake flour, potatoes and a host of other things that come to mind as one carefully surveys the grocer's stock.

No doubt our ancestors, who spent all of their lives under such circumstances, would scorn our judgment and flatly inform us that we would be much healthier if we would restrict our diets. But, being victims of the modern customs, we would laugh and say, "We're doing well enough, thank you."

Having acquired the provisions necessary for sustenance, one must accumulate the required amount of bedding and cooking utensils, as well as his own clothing, and turn to the difficult task of packing the automobile. Difficult, is hardly a strong enough word, as the task is really worse; and the results are an aching head and frayed nerves which have nearly reached the breaking point.

The trial-and-error method is employed by those engaged in the undertaking. The bedding must be packed first. After some consideration, one decides to spread the blankets over the back seat until it is fully six inches higher than before, making it utterly impossible for the small children's feet to reach the floor. Next comes the shelf behind the rear seat. One piles and crams until all of the space is filled; then suddenly he remembers that the driver must see the traffic which is approaching from the rear; consequently, all that work must be done again. At length, the already fatigued party is ready to begin its journey to the woods. Everyone is not only very tired, but also extremely hungry when he arrives at the cabin; therefore, kindling

must be split with which to light a fire in the kitchen cookstove in order that the evening meal may be prepared.

As someone goes reluctantly to split the kindling, he likens himself unto Abraham Lincoln and rejoices that this is not to be his lot forever. Already he is lamenting his circumstances — but wait! This is only the first evening, and there are still five days more to this life to be endured.

Supper is over. Now comes the task of washing dishes. Always a joy for the one who must complete it, this obligation looms more trying to the patience when it is realized that water must be drawn from the nearby well and heated on the cookstove in order for this duty to be completed. It is not really so bad as it seems, and soon the clean dishes are gleaming and sparkling in the lamplight as they await the coming of the next mealtime.

Needless to say, everyone is coated with dust and grime after laboring so diligently at the duties heretofore described; so we come to the question of how to remove the dirt. Since there is no bathroom, everyone is of the opinion that a dip in the salt-water of the bay is the most plausible solution.

Everyone scrambles for his bathing suit and soon the bay is swarming with bathers who, for a few brief moments, are forgetting the cares of the past and the future, being completely lost in the joys of the present.

The sun sinks in the west; night falls; the nearest radio, telephone, theater, or dance hall is twenty-five miles distant; gasoline rationing is in effect; only one alternative remains — retirement. Without further adieu, the household prepares to sleep. Springs, mattresses, sheets, and blankets are brought to the sleeping porch; then beds are made up. All the nine inhabitants of the cabin will sleep in this

large bedroom outdoors.

Now all is quiet. If a stranger were to approach, he would hear only the regular breathing of the occupants, breaking the silence of the summer night.

Days are passing; the outside world is slipping into oblivion; the occupants of the cabin are enjoying their vacation uninterrupted. The problems which present themselves from day to day are solved in the same manner as upon that first evening.

The only forms of recreation are fishing, swimming, boating, sleeping, hiking, and reading magazines, most of which are a year old or older; for not even a newspaper reaches this remote shore.

Everyone must eat; consequently, crabs, flounders, mackerel, and frog-legs are obtained to supplement the staples which were acquired in the city. The ingenuity of the cook devises new ways

of preparing them. One day the chief dish is baked crab; the next it is crab salad; then comes crab gumbo and crab omelet. "That's a lot of crab," you will say. Yes, but every dish is so different that one doesn't tire of it.

The five days are over now, and all of the problems of living in primitive fashion have been met successfully. Everyone works hard to break camp; soon the party is on its way to the city. Everyone is talking at once of the pleasures of a hot shower, a delicious steak or pork chop on the dinner table, the jangle of the telephone, the blare of the radio, the personal letters to be read, and the newspaper headlines. All these things which have been taken for granted in the past will be appreciated by those who have learned how to do without them.

Kitchen Kingdom

JUNE ANN GOODRICH

During the summer, the kitchen was the coolest and most cheerful place to find refuge from the summer heat. In the winter, it served as a sewing room, study and game room, as its old, iron stove was in great demand after the first frost.

The morning sun had just slid over the top of the large elm on the edge of the yard, sending yellow rays bouncing through the fluffy red and white curtains. As the beams fell against the shiny pots and pans, which showed the industrious scrubbing of busy hands, they were thrown back with diamond-like flashes.

The white wall had a border of red duck and chicken transfers. There was

no head on the rooster because Jimmy had broken it off the rubber stamp while cracking nuts with it.

A lace or linen tablecloth would have been an alien in this kitchen, while the red-checked oilcloth had the situation well in hand. A milk bottle, taking the place of Betty's ornate vase, was distinguishing itself by holding the long stems of the proud, honey-colored Golden Rod which Jimmy had picked for his "mom".

Against the north wall stood an old oak cupboard with an enormous glass door. It was heavily carved and looked out of place in the small white room. It was no longer suitable for the dining room, so